New Breed of Bt Cotton

208. SHRI K.C. KONDAIAH: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Karnataka Government has requested the Union Government to give permission to grow Bt Cotton by farmers;

(b) whether it has come to the notice of Government that the Agricultural University in Karnataka has invented a new breed in this regard;

(c) whether permission has been given to grow Bt Cotton by farmers in that State;

(d) if not, when would it be given; and

(e) the estimated area in the State where this Bt Cotton would be grown?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) Yes, Sir. The Karnataka Government has requested the Government for according early approval for Bt cotton.

(b) No, sir.

(c) to (e) The Genetic Engineering Approval Committee (GEAC) set up under the Rule 4 of the Rules for Manufacture, Use, Import, Export and storage of hazardous microorganisms/Genetically Engineered Organisms or Cells 1989 notified under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986, has so far not accorded approval for commercial release of Bt cotton in the country. The Maharashtra Hybrid Seed Company (MAHYCO) has been involved in the research, development and testing of transgenic Bt varieties cotton. The GEAC directed MAHYCO to repeal the large seale field trials of transgenic cotton. The Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) was also requested to undertake trials under their Advanced Varietal Trials of All India Coordinated Cotton Improvement Project. The GEAC had requested the Monitoring cum Evaluation Committee (MEC) of the Review Committee for Genetic Manipulation, set up by the Department of Biotecnology to monitor MAHYCO's large scale field trial.

MAHYCO has since conducted large scale field trials of Bt cotton in about 400 locations in the central and southern states. The MEC constituted 10 monitoring teams comprising scientists, representatives from the State Agricultural Universities and senior officials from State Agriculture Departments besides experts and Central Government officials. The Monitoring teams visited 62 locations between the last week of September, and last week of December

2001 and monitored the field trials. The MEC has submitted its report to the GEAC.

The ICAR has also conducted the field trials in 11 locations in Central and Southern zones. Monitoring teams consisting of ICAR scientists, and experts monitored these trials. The ICAR has also submitted its report. GEAC will consider the proposal in its next meeting.

Loan for effluent treatment plants

†209. SHRIMATI SAVITA SHARDA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are considering to advance loans on easy instalments to industrial units, for installation of effluent treatment plants conforming to environment protection norms;

(b) if so, whether Government have taken any action in this regard, so far; and

(c) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) to (c) No Sir. However, the Government is extending subsidy to the small and medium scale industries for construction of Common Effluent Treatment Plants (CETPs). The financing pattern for the CETPs consists of a central subsidy of 25% of the total project cost, a matching state subsidy of 25% of the total project cost, enterpreneurs' contribution of 20% and a loan of 30% from any financial institution.

Performance of Pollution Control Boards

210. SHRI R.P. GOENKA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether an indepth study has been made of the findings of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India in its recent report, highlighting the dismal performance of the Central and State Pollution Control Boards, especially those relating to prevention and control of pollution of water bodies in various parts of the country; and

(b) if so, the details of steps initiated to sensitise and streamline the functioning of Pollution Control Boards, to overcome various inadequacies/

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.